THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

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Agriculture.

FARMING IN CHINA.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

It will no doubt interest readers of The Progressive Farmer to know how the farmers on the other side of the globe manage their business. And to give your readers a glimpse at their methods, I send herewith an extract from a report by Consul Martin, of Chinkiang, China, just received at the Department of State here. Very truly yours,

B.

Washington, D. C.

Farming is not carried on in a large way here in the Celestial Empire. Farms ranging from half an acre to five acres constitute the large and small holdings; it is clear they do not require reapers, mowers, thrashing machines or steam plows. The Chinese dead seem to have pre-emption rights over all the hills and hillsides, leaving only the plains and valleys to the living—even these are encroached upon by the coffins of past generations.

The people build dikes of mud, inclosing, say, half an acre each, often making them from three to six feet high, to receive and retain the spring rains. Into the water they go—men, women, and children—and work until their little farm is planted in rice. Most of their time after the spring rains are over is spent in treading the carrier pumps or bringing water and pouring on the rice plants until the harvest time comes. I have no doubt hoes, rakes, shovels, and cheap hand rice hullers would find a market here, for the American implements are as far ahead of what they use as a diamond is superior to a sandstone.

The localities where wheat or barley is raised have farms about the same size. The plow is a light affair made of a crooked stick, with a steel point fastened to it, and is pulled by a water buffalo, a kind of half breed between Texan cattle and the western buffalo. Because he loves to wallow in the water, with his nose, eyes, and ears above that element, he is called water buffalo. When he is used for plowing, they attach a rope to the machine and slip a loop around his neck; being powerful and the plowing being shallow, he pulls the plow with the rope on only one side. They plant wheat just as we would plant corn; they do not sow it. As it begins to show above ground, they gather up all the human excrement they can, mix it with water, and scatter it over the growing grain or vegetables to force their growth.

When harvest time comes, men and women take a blade, inserted in a short handle at an angle of about 45°, and proceed to cut the grain, bind it carefully, and carry it to the thrashing floor near their buildings. This floor is a hard, beaten spot of ground about 20 feet in diameter. The water buffalo, muzzled and attached to a stone roller, tramps and rolls the grain out of the ear. After the thrashing is done, they throw wheat and chaff in the air and allow the wind to blow the chaff away. When the wheat is thus winnowed, they gather it up, put it into bags, and pound what they need for use in a stone mortar.

I think scythes, small hand thrashers, fanning mills, and some cheap apparatus for grinding would find a large market here in time.

WM. MARTIN, Consul.

Chinkiang, China, Feb. 10, 1900.

This item from the Texas Farm and Ranch is worth a moment's thought: A neighbor rented twenty acres to a negro, who was to commence work at a certain date, but did not show up. He was called on for an explanation. "I'll be dar fust of week after nex' shore, Cap'n." But he did not come at all, and it was too late to rent to some one else. Thereupon the "Cap'n" hired another negro to break and harrow the twenty acres the first week in May. The crab grass hay sold from the twenty acres brought more cash than any twenty acres on the farm, and it cost less than one-half as much to produce and market the crop than a similar area of either cotton or corn.

HOW PEAS AND PROPER CROP ROTATION HAVE BENEFITED ONE FARMER.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

I read Prof. Massey's article on the cow pea in The Progressive Farmer of May 8th with much interest. I have been practicing the doctrine he preaches for five or six years and have so improved my soil that, without any improvement in buildings, the tax assessors have substantially increased the valuation of my farm. I rotate in this way: cotton, then corn and peas, followed by wheat and peas. Twelve acres of land that five years ago wouldn't produce cotton knee high now average a bale per acre, and land that did not make two barrels of corn per acre now produces 6 to 8 barrels. Try this rotation. J. L. BANKS.

Wake Co., N. C.

GEORGIA COTTON GROWERS ORGANIZE.

A Cotton Growers' Convention was held at Macon, Ga., Saturday, 12th, and press dispatches say that it was one of the largest convocations of representative planters and business men ever held in Georgia. The convention was called for the purpose of effecting an organization of the cotton planters, to enable them to secure a better price for cotton. Five hundred delegates were present, representing every county in the State, and composed of planters, warehousemen, manufacturers, bankers, merchants and lawyers. The convention was addressed by Hon. Hoke Smith, Hon. Pope Brown, President of the State Agricultural Society; Hon. J. F. Hanson, Harvey Jordan, I. B. English and others. Mr. Smith, in his address, said in substance, that the value of the South's cotton crop is further reaching in its effect than any other product of the soil, its aggregate value being over $300,000,000. He stated that during the last 100 years, the money paid for cotton raised in the United States amounted to $15,000,000,000, and of this amount $11,000,000,000 was received for cotton exports. He said that in 50 years the consumption of cotton had increased from 2,500,000 bales annually to 18,000,000 bales annually, an increase of 700 per cent. He advised the farmers of the South to organize so as to control the marketing of their crop on such a basis as would secure to them its real value.

The convention concluded with the organization of the Georgia Cotton Growers' Association, and elected Harvey Jordan, President; F. M. Langley, Vice-President, and N. R. Hutchinson, Secretary and Treasurer, and an executive committee, composed of three representatives from each Congressional district. The plan upon which the work of organizing the farmers is to be effected was referred to the committee on organization and the executive committee jointly—the convention ratifying, in advance, any plan that might be adopted. Macon was chosen as permanent headquarters of the association.

TURKISH TOBACCO.

Rocky Mount, N. C., is now the seat of a little experiment in planting Turkish tobacco on the farm of Mr. H. Griffin, superintended by Mr. Macreary Karas, of Macedonia, who represents a New York firm. If he is successful, Rocky Mount tobacco will be worth a dollar a pound, instead of 6 to 8 cents.

The plant and leaves of Turkish tobacco are very small and differ in shape from our tobaccos. The seed are drilled for transplanting. Who knows but what this or other soils will produce the richest kind? If the first year's crop don't succeed the second may. There is a settled thing now that each plant kind carries a fungus with it that requires a second year's growth by which the soil is inoculated, and then the plant grows well.—Southern Tobacconist.

It is wonderfully convenient to have some one whose business it is to do odd jobs on the farm, and who may be depended on to do everything everywhere at the right time, and to be called on in cases where extra help is needed. Such an one is invaluable.

CROP CONDITIONS.

The first crop bulletin of the season was issued last week. It shows the condition of crops throughout North Carolina early in May.

The report is based on returns from every county in the State, save four.

The report shows that farmers are not so well up with their work. There is a decrease in the amount of corn and other crops planted. Trucking and small fruit make a much better showing than last year.

The following figures give the averages of returns from all counties in the State, the basis for comparison being 100;

What is the general condition and progress of farm work in this year compared with the average? Answer, 91.

How much cotton has been planted, or is going to be planted. compared with last year? Answer, 109.

How much corn will be planted compared with last year? Answer, 98.

What is the condition of wheat compared with an average? Answer, 99.

What amount of oats was sown compared with an average? Answer, 91.

What is the condition of oats compared with an average? Answer, 90.

What is the number of horses compared with last year? Answer, 100.

What is the number of mules compared with last year? Answer, 100.

What is the number of cattle compared with last year? Answer, 92.

What is the number of hogs compared with last year? Answer. 94.

What is the condition of the trucking interests and small fruits compared with last year? Answer, 109.

The four counties that are not included in the returns are Chowan, Dare, Jackson and Pender.

FARMERS' MAIL BOXES.

Congressman J. William Stokes, of South Carolina, is urging a bill before Congress for the convenience of the scattered farming population. The measure proposes to include in contracts for carrying mail on the star routes the deposit in proper boxes placed on the line of the routes, without extra charge to the addressees, of any mail matter that may be intrusted to the carrier by any postmaster on the route. In a letter to Congress the Postoffice Department strongly endorses the plan as follows:

"We know that it is the practice now on many star routes for the carriers to take the mail and deposit it in boxes along the line of the routes, but in the absence of legislation it rests entirely with the pleasure of the carriers whether they will give the people this accommodation or not. It also puts it in the power of a carrier to discriminate against some people while accommodating others on the same route. The proposed law would give equal accommodation to all people living on or near the line of star routes.

"I do not think it would largely increase the cost, because the distance traveled by the carriers would not be increased at all. It would require a little more time, of course, for the carriers to stop and deposit the mail or collect it from the boxes, and in some cases it would requre more intelligent carriers than are now employed, as all carriers must be able to read addresses on the mail matter taken by them outside of the bags to be placed in the proper boxes. It is also possible that in those cases where carriers are now charging the people along the line of route a fee for delivering their mail into boxes, there would be a tendency to slightly increase the price under the contract if the law prohibited the charging of such fees; but as these star route contracts are let after having been widely advertised, and as there is much competition in bidding for them, I think that the increase in cost would be but slight compared with the additional facilities rendered to the public."

How's your subscription?

EARLY TO THE FIELD.

The farmer does not need to be a work-slave. His calling demands nothing akin to servility. It does demand persistent and close attention and judicious management. Working with team from 4 o'clock in the morning till 8 at night has perhaps made some farmers well-to-do, but the tax on their health generally has counteracted the gains thus made. To work sixteen hours a day is in most cases to save at the spiggot and lose at the bung. The farmer who enters the field before daylight usually neglects some little duty at the house or barn. Neglected little things soon become important big things. No one advises against early rising on the farm, yet good judgment certainly does not sanction the custom of some farmers in this regard. It is important that a good day's work be done in the fields whenever weather conditions permit, but it is not needful that nearly two days' work be done in one. It has been observed that those who get to work at 6 o'clock in the morning and quit at that time in the evening accomplish as much in the end as those who use a lantern when harnessing their their teams for the day's work, says Farmers' Voice.

It is not the rush-and-run kind of labor that shows results; it is the steady, constant, uniform and intelligent industry of man that brings reward. The intellectual man needs cultivation and training in order properly to direct the physical being. Some efforts in this direction should be made during the evenings unless there is absolute necessity of very early and very late work in the field, as frequently is the case. Family relations, to be pleasant, should be strengthened at evening by the farmer's presence in the home before the bed-time. At 7 o'clock during during the summer days the farmer ought to be through with his day's work, feeding, milking and other "chores" about the house and barn, and be ready to enjoy two hours or more with his family. This is one way to make rural life pleasanter, happier and brighter.

That it sometimes is imperative to get to work very early and keep at it until very late no one acquainted with farm life will dispute. At certain seasons when perhaps contingencies arise, demanding prompt work, sixteen hours a day may with advantage be devoted to the work; but taking all things into account we believe a safe and wise rule has been laid down by an old friend who has made a noble success on a small farm and enjoyed good health, the confidence and warm friendship of his neighbors and the companionship of a happy, contented family. His motto is: "Work from sun to sun."

RAPE AGAIN.

R. C. G., Iowa, asks a dozen or more questions about rape. One of his questions is, "Will it do well on land that is somewhat run down? If it will I intend to sow a few acres of such land to it and then pasture with sheep to bring the soil up."

The same kind of soil that will make good cabbage will make good rape. Any market gardener will declare that he does not know how to get land too rich for cabbage. It is a gross feeder and demands a soil that is "rich as cream." So also does rape. I have tried it on soil that was rather poor and cold, and in three months it reached a height of about seven inches, and the leaves were tough and leathery. But on very rich soil it grows like weeds and yields a vast quantity of food that is succulent and makes fair feed for cattle, sheep and hogs, and an especially good green food for yarded fowls. So far as my experience goes it would be a waste of seed to sow it on land that is thin, poor, heavy or cold. R. C. G. can bring his soil up much quicker with cow peas than with rape and sheep. He should sow the black variety about the middle of May, or immediately after corn is planted, cut for hay when the lower pods are ripe, and if there springs up an aftermath, as most likely there will, he can pasture that off, then sow the same tract to cow peas again next year, and the following year I think he can get a good crop of oats or corn off the land.—T. Greiner, in Farm and Fireside.

Horticulture.

FRUIT SHOULD BE THINNED.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

The average farmer pays little or no attention to thinning fruit. If the tree is overloaded, so that the limbs bend almost to the breaking point, some will set props under the limbs to keep them from breaking entirely down, while others more careless will let the limbs break off. They may complain of the size and quality of the fruit when it is harvested, but few think it necessary or will take the trouble to thin out in good season, and thereby not only save the trees, but secure fruit of a much better quality. In nearly all cases a tree making a thrifty growth will, if left unmolested, set more fruit than under ordinary conditions it should be allowed to mature. In fact, one cause, though not generally the only one, of trees failing to bear is on account of being allowed to overbear one year, lowering the vitality to such an extent that the tree is incapable of bearing the next year.

Thinning can be done to an advantage where fruit of good size and quality is desired. But if anything like satisfactory results are secured it must be done in good season, reasonably soon after the fruit sets.

The larger the fruit is allowed to become before thinning the greater the drain upon the tree and the less good will result.

It of course seems troublesome to go to fruit trees and take off from one-fourth to one-half the specimens, selecting those that are too close together and that are the least promising, yet when there is a full crop and uniform choice fruit is desired, thinning becomes necessary. And when it is to be done advantage should be taken of the first favorable opportunity for doing the work. Peaches, pears and grapes especially can be thinned to an advantage, and in many cases apples also.

N. J. SHEPHERD.

Our trucking and fruit-growing friends, now that returns are coming in, will please remember The Progressive Farmer. Renewals and new subscriptions are always acceptable, but especially so in the dull summer months.

INTELLIGENT ORCHARDING.

Correspondence of The Progressive Farmer.

The application of intelligence to the work of farming or orcharding must be placed down as one of the most important factors in making a success. A set of rules rigidly lived up to never produced as good results as intelligence with a less general knowledge of exact rules. It may be difficult to illustrate my point, for an intelligent farmer is often guided by rules. He has learned from experience or the experience of others that certain things should be done at the proper time in one particular way, and it is always on hand to do the work accordingly. But he is not a blind follower of rules, which may have so many modifications that sometimes it might work a positive injury to follow them. The man, for instance, who sprays regularly every year without any definite reason for it is shortsighted. He may lose valuable time and material some seasons without doing any good. Spraying should not be carried on by rule, but whenever there are any evidences that it is needed it should not be neglected a day. That is where the application of intelligence comes in. The owner is supposed to be sufficiently well acquainted with the different insects and blights to be able to detect their first appearance. He does not trust to luck or anything else then except the spray. The trees are then sprayed so thoroughly and effectively that there is little chance of any insects escaping, and it is repeated as often as needed.

Likewise in the matter of culture and manuring. The orchard needs to be treated to cultivation in accordance with its condition. The intelligent farmer does not run around to get particular brands of manure, but he saves all that he can, and applies what he thinks is actually needed. He knows when the ground shows that it has sufficient green manure, and when it appears to be in need of lime, phosphates and mineral elements. He knows these things because he has made a study of the subject, and his knowledge is such that he can apply it readily and intelligently.

That is the great thing needful in every walk of life. Some people never seem to be able to bring any actual intelligence to bear on their business if they live to be a century old. They never succeed because they have not intelligence enough to make things around them contribute to their success. It is not only farming, but many other industries that require intelligence applied in a study and execution of the ordinary work of the day.

C. M. MESSMER.

IT DOESN'T PAY.

The editor of the Texas Truck Farmer was shown the other day a case of strawberries, shipped from a point in Eastern Texas, which he says was a disgrace to the man who packed it. On top, he writes, there was a layer of as fine berries as ever grew, but underneath the boxes were filled with small, unripe berries not fit to eat. The man who grew those berries probably got a good price from the man who shipped them, yet the retail dealer, of course, kicked and his kick will go back until it reaches the guilty party. Furthermore, the shipper will have lost his confidence in the grower who will watch his berries closely hereafter. The berries referred to were almost unsalable. They had a card on them offering them for five cents a box and found few buyers at that. As a matter of fact they were almost absolutely worthless.

Nobody objects to putting a layer of the best berries on top, unless it might be the Reverend Sheldon, who would justly claim that that is not the way Jesus would do. It makes them more attractive and salable, and does no real injury to the consumer; but when one is foolish enough to buy a box like those referred to above without examining them, which is not often, he feels that he has been swindled, and he is right about it. It has been suggested that there ought to be a law compelling every packer of fruit of any kind to put his name in legible letters on each package which he sends out. This seems to be a good idea. It ought to be hailed with approval by every man who wants to send out fruit that will give satisfaction and good value alike to all who handle it. Indeed, a grower who values his reputation and wants to reap the highest reward for his labor will not need any law of this kind. He will see at once that it is necessary for him to do it in order to protect himself from the dishonest grower and keep up the prices of his goods. This is not, of course, possible where the product is shipped in bulk and not in a receptacle of some kind, but it is applicable to all small fruits.

GRAPE GROWING IN THE SOUTH.

Grape vines grow well in all parts of the South, and, with reasonable care, they never fail to produce abundant crops. In Farmers' Bulletin No. 118, "Grape Growing in the South," by S. M. Tracy, M. S., formerly Director of the Mississippi Experiment Station, now in press and soon to be issued by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, are given the methods which Southern grape growers have found most satisfactory, knowledge of which, it is hoped, may prove useful to those who wish to grow grapes in a small way for family use, or more largely for market or for wine making.

The bulletin truthfully says there is no part of the South where grapes of fine quality cannot be grown in sufficient quantity for home use, and in many parts they are an exceedingly profitable market crop.

A gentle slope to the south and east is to be preferred for a vineyard, and, if practicable, should be arranged with the vines running north

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